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Occupational Prestige Among Chinese in the San Francisco Area

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OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE AMONG
CHINESE IN THE SAN FRANCISCO AREA

by

LINDA FONG

A report submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF
SOCIAL WORK

Portland State University
1974

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
LIST OF TABLES.....	111
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Definitions.....	3
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	15
III. METHOD OF STUDY.....	22
Hypothesis.....	22
Source of Data and Collection.....	22
Changes from Pretest.....	25
Analysis of Returns.....	25
IV. DATA ANALYSIS.....	26
General Characteristics of Respondents.....	26
Respondent Attitudes Concerning Chinese Practices.....	30
Lack of Parameters.....	35
Data Testing, Hypothesis, and Results.....	38
V. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	42
Summary and Implications.....	42
Discussion.....	44
Recommendations.....	48

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	27
B. Overview of Respondent Attitudes Concerning Chinese Practices.....	30
I. Chi Squares for Sorting of Base Data.....	39
APPENDIX A.....	51

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The aim of our study is to understand Chinese attitudes towards occupational prestige in order to be able to counsel families and youth in career goals, and to maximize potentials and enhance life chances. Our purpose is to arrive first at an occupational ranking or rating since there is none to be found in the literature on which more specific studies could later be compared. Another purpose is to see whether there were major differences between traditional and modern Chinese, and find what traits were associated with differences in attitudes and expectations, as further indices of appropriate approaches to social services.

The Nees in their book, Longtime Californ', speak of the need to study Chinese people in their life situation:

We found that the people (in Chinatown) were generally encouraging and positive about the prospect of a community study done by a fellow American Chinese. They agreed it had been necessary to return to Chinatown for a longer period of work in order to deal responsibly with its complicated society and past. Many expressed a sense that they had been victimized by a long history of misunderstanding, oversimplification, and distortion of the American Chinese community and those who lived outside. They felt there was an urgent need for clear analysis which would dispel destructive stereotypes of Chinatown. Everyone, from

the "establishment" to the "radical," stressed that the book could make its greatest contribution by being objective.¹

The original intent was to gain a random sample of the Chinese population in San Francisco. But due to failure to obtain the cooperation of the newspaper editors of the Chinese community, a systematic random sample was taken from the San Francisco phone book. A sample of four hundred names was drawn and questionnaires were sent to three hundred eighty people. See Appendix A for questionnaire. The return was poor, coming to only fifty. Upon attempting to find parameters for our study to see if our study was representative though small, none could be found. Consequently, our findings are not representative of the Chinese population in San Francisco, only of some, namely our sample.

The rationale for attaining the sample thus was first getting the total number of Chinese residents who had listed phones in the San Francisco area. Those listed in Daly City, Brisbane or Colma were purposely excluded, as they were not a representative part of the San Francisco population. After obtaining a total number 13,196 and dividing it by 500, the quotient 26 was obtained. Thus, the questionnaire was sent to every twenty-sixth name on the list. The

3

systematic sample did not account for an equal number of women.

Definitions

Traditionalism:

The traditionalist has strongly internalized Chinese values. There is an attempt to be a 'good' son or daughter. Primary allegiance is to the family into which he was born. Self-worth and -esteem are defined by his ability to succeed in terms of high educational achievement, occupational status, etc. With success, he feels respectable in American society; he has brought honor to the family name and has accomplished this, all as a minority member.²

Despite his attempt to confine his social life to the Chinese subculture, he is unable to fully isolate himself from members of the host society. Learned patterns of obedience and conformity are transferred to the interactions with them... Role expectations in the Chinese family are well-defined and structured, he (trad.) may find it difficult to interact with Caucasians, who are often behaving under different expectations... frequently... diametrically opposed... As for institutional racism, the traditionalist is often less aware or concerned, since he believes he can overcome obstacles if he works hard enough.³

The traditionalist thus tends to be more financially secure, higher educated, occupationally prestigious, conservative, conforming, having difficulties with interacting with Caucasians, and as for institutional racism is less concerned or aware

For an operational definition of traditionalism and modernism there was use of several criteria in terms of responses to the questionnaire used in the study: language and usage of the two main Chinese dialects, diet, traditional Chinese practices, attitudes towards dating and marriage practices. For the purposes of our study, the criteria set for a traditionalist was that he celebrate Chinese New Year's, believed that father or grandparents should rule the home, checked "yes" or "depends" on obedience to parents on school, career, mate, believed that boys should be encouraged to go to college, and then would say that Chinese should marry Chinese.

The Chinese modern has been described by Sue as the "Marginal" man, and the "Asian American."

To quote:

The Marginal Man attempts to assimilate and acculturate into the majority society. Existing between the margin of two cultures, he suffers from an identity crisis... finds self worth defined in terms of acceptance by Caucasians... hostility and denial of his minority culture may cause him to turn his hostility inward and to develop a form of 'racial self-hatred.' The Asian American tried to formulate a new identity by integrating his past experiences with his present conditions. He shares common patterns with the other two... he associates with other Chinese without embarrassment as does the Traditionalist. And like the Marginal Man, he experiences some guilt for his unwillingness to fully accept the dictates of his parents. However, the Asian American's defiance is less a rejection of Chinese ways

than an attempt to preserve certain Chinese values in the formation of a new identity... complete obedience to traditional values limits his self-growth... his political and social awareness is more fully developed... orientation also includes other Asian groups as a basis for identity... the group is extremely important to him... Anyone who is perceived to threaten the Asian American group is, in a real sense, threatening his identity. Thus he may feel quite intolerant of the traditionalist and particularly, of the Marginal Man who wants to assimilate... may become extremely militant in his reaction to racism.⁴

The Modern thus tends to be less sure of his identity and attempts to integrate it through assimilation into the white culture or to form a new identity, associates with other Chinese, feels guilty for not being "obedient" or "good" toward his parents, struggles with Chinese values, is more socially and politically aware, and threatened regarding identity by any attack on his Asian group.

Operationally defined, the Modern would respond to the questionnaire items by saying that mother and father ruled the home or that there should be a consensus of family opinion, "no" to obedience to parents regarding school, career, mate; girls should be encouraged to go to school or answered with "depends....," and would say that Chinese should marry any of the categories listed other than "Chinese." This would mean "other orientals," "whites," and "anyone."

Demographic Traits

The demographic traits of some of the San Francisco Chinese are now stated. The following data is gathered from Chinatown 1970 Census: Population and Housing Summary Analysis. It is significant to note that the area of this study included only 56.6 percent of the total Chinese population of San Francisco. The area studied included a core area consisting of census tracts 113, 114, and 118; a residential area of tracts 6, 7, 8, 10, and 15; and then an expanded area of tract numbers 3, 4, 9, 11, and 12.

Population:

Population density is extremely high as compared to the city's average and to other neighborhoods in the city. Density reached a high of 228.1 persons per net acre, 7.2 times greater than the city's average of 31.7 persons.

While a high concentration of Chinese and other orientals was evident in the "core" area (88.5 percent Chinese), a continuing trend of migration to adjacent areas boosted the concentration of Chinese and other orientals in the residential area to 73.7 percent, and the expanded area to 56.6 percent.

In 1970, there were 435,062 Chinese in the United States. This was an increase of 83.3 percent over the total in 1960. San Francisco was second to New York in Chinese population. Although San Francisco contains 13.5 percent (58,696) of the total Chinese population in the United States, New York has 15.9 percent. However, San Francisco has the highest percentage of Chinese population in relation to its total population of any city in the nation.

Nationally and locally, the increase in Chinese population in the last decade was attributed to immigration rather than natural increase.

Youths, young adults 15 to 24 years old, and elderly persons of 65 years and over are the only groups that experienced increase. In 1970, there were 9,854 people between the ages of 15 and 24 in Chinatown, an increase of 84 percent over 1960 population figures. This segment accounts for 17.6 percent of the total Chinatown population, and 7.9 percent of the city's age group. Elderly people in 1970 numbered 8,068, an increase of 16.5 percent over 1960.

The median age for Chinese in the expanded area is 36.0 — for the city it is 35.7. Median age for the nonwhite population in the expanded area is 33.5, while that in the city is 26.9.

Increase in age group 15 to 24 is attributed to the postwar baby boom, and immigration of families with children this age; the increase in elderly persons is attributed to better medical service, thus longer survival rates. Considerable numbers of elderly women immigrated to the United States during the ten years to rejoin their husbands. This, plus the postwar baby boom, has made the sex ratio a little more equal.

In 1960, there were 7 percent more males than females. This difference decreased to 6 percent in 1970. Increases in young females aged 15 to 25 years as well as female senior citizens aged 65 and over were responsible for this change.

Family population increased by 5.8 percent during the decade: from 36,780 in 1960 to 38,905 in 1970. The number of families increased by 2.4 percent; the average family size increased slightly from 3.3 in 1960 to 3.4 in 1970.

Forty-two point eight percent of the families had children under 18 years old. The average number of children under 18 per family ranged from a high of 2.3 per family in the core Chinatown to 1.9 in the outskirts.

Households:

From 1960 to 1970, the number of households decreased by 2.0 percent, that is, from 26,110 to 25,575. This decrease of households was mainly caused by the decrease of primary individuals which, together with heads of families constituted the total number of households. The decrease of primary individuals, a loss of 5.4 percent from 1960, is contrary to the general increase not only in San Francisco, but in the Bay Area as well.

Housing:

Since 1960, there has been a 5 percent decrease in the number of houses in the Chinatown area. The housing units in Chinatown which are predominantly renter-occupied have lower vacancy rates than the city as a whole, and there are fewer of them. In the Chinatown "core" area, more than two-thirds of the housing stock consists of units of two rooms or less. In the Chinatown expanded area, 13.4 percent of the total housing stock is overcrowded. One quarter of these are located in the "core" area — this level of concentration was three and a half times higher than the city's proportion of overcrowded units. Overcrowded units

were 52.2 percent more than in 1960. This rate of increase was six times greater than the city's average.

Quite a number of these housing units were found deficient in both plumbing and kitchen facilities. The substandard housing accounted for 26 percent of the city's total. The highest concentration, amounting to 43.7 percent, was in the Chinatown "core" area.⁵

Communal kitchens and bathrooms are a way of life in these buildings. The electric wiring systems are antiquated, and many of the windows face into alleys or brick walls so that rooms are completely deprived of natural light.

Health:

Many of the bachelors, who still have problems with their immigration status, fear seeking medical assistance from the government health agencies and for years have had absolutely no medical attention. They suffer from general malnutrition, trachoma, tuberculosis, alcoholism, and depression. Until the establishment in 1970 of the Northeast Medical Services, health facilities in Chinatown were extremely limited. For a population of over 40,000 people, there was one hospital with 60 beds. In 1969, it was estimated that there were at least ten thousand people in the community who could not afford medical care.⁶

To these medical indigents, only one outpatient clinic was available. It included a tuberculosis clinic, baby, dental, immunization, and public health

nursing service. In a year, the clinic provided care for approximately fifteen hundred people. In this area, there is one dentist per 2,500 patients.

In 1969, with only two Chinese-speaking psychiatrists in San Francisco, it was estimated that twenty hours of direct service was available to the poor and non-English-speaking Chinatown residents per week. The highest tuberculosis rate and suicide rate in the nation are still held by Chinatown at the present time.

Education:

Until school busing began in 1971, the majority of Chinatown children attended the three public grammar schools which had enrollments which were ninety-five percent Chinese. In the evening, they study Chinese language in one of the twelve Chinese schools in the community. These number about one-third of the Chinese elementary students.

Recently there has been a serious confrontation between Chinese parents and the San Francisco School Board. Leaders of the community have criticized the Board for not being sensitive to the community. At Galileo High School, sixty-one percent of the teaching staff is white. All principals of the predominantly Chinese schools are white. The Board has been unwilling to make adequate preparations to accommodate the

large influx of immigrant youths from Hong Kong, most of whom have serious language problems.

Worship:

The most numerous places of worship in Chinatown are the Christian churches. The Buddhist Church draws a large congregation. The Jeng Sen Buddhist and Taoist Association are open daily. Remnants of ancestor worship are visible in many homes.

Conclusions

Remembering that the Census study was limited to only 56 percent of the San Francisco Chinese and how it explored the parameters of the "Chinatown" area, we make these generalizations.

Population density is very high as compared to the city. There is a continuing trend of Chinese to move to adjacent areas in Chinatown. There are almost twice the number of Chinese in the United States as there were in 1960, San Francisco having the highest percentage in relation to the total population. This is due to immigration and natural increase. Though there has been a large increase in the numbers of young people (15-24) and old (65 plus), the median age has remained close to the city's median of 35.7. There was a big decrease in proportion of men from

1960 to 1970. The number and size of families increased slightly while there were fewer places to live — those available being substandard. The health of much of the population is poor and available services few. Most Chinese children attend one of the three schools in the Chinatown area — of which they make up 95 percent of the enrollment. There is a larger number of Protestant churches than of the traditional Buddhist or Taoist churches.

These are some parameters of approximately half of the population of our study. They are necessary to examine and to make comparisons with the demographic traits of the population of our sample.

CHAPTER NOTES

¹Victor G. Nee and Bret de Bary Nee, Longtime Californ', Pantheon Books, New York, 1972, 73, p. xx-xxi.

²Stanley Sue and Derald Wing Sue, "Chinese-American Personality and Mental Health," Asian-Americans' Psychological Perspectives, Science and Behavior Books, Inc., BenLomond, California, 1973, p. 113.

³Ibid., p. 114.

⁴Ibid., pp. 115-120.

⁵San Francisco Department of City Planning, Chinatown 1970 Census: Population and Housing Summary and Analysis, August 1972, pp. 3-6.

⁶Nee, op. cit., xxiii.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Little pertinent information has been published with specific regard to our research project. There has been much written regarding occupational ranking of different groups in the white majority of America, but not much regarding minority groups — specifically Asian-Americans.

To shed some light on how Chinese feel about tradition, modernism, and occupations, the present paper is an initial attempt at an analysis of San Francisco's Chinese within the limitation of our research sample.

The literature of how Chinese feel about occupations will be examined first, then a broader focus of other comparative Asian studies, concluded by some studies that may reflect the future of occupational aspirations for the Chinese.

The following contrasting statements, which appeared in the same periodical, reflect the occupational status of Chinese in America.

One such minority, the nation's 300,000 Chinese Americans, is winning wealth and respect by dint of its own hard work.¹

Not all Chinese Americans are rich. Many, especially recent arrivals from Hong Kong, are poor and cannot speak English. But the large majority are moving ahead by applying the traditional virtues of hard work, thrift and morality.²

Regarding kinds of occupational successes,

Chinese-American males have experienced many successes in American society. They have proven themselves as scholars in our education system, enterprising entrepreneurs in their business ventures, and professionals.³

In an attempt to gather information of normative attitudes of how Chinese-Americans view occupations, the researcher looked for common threads in the various prestigious occupations of the Chinese.

In a study made by Sue and Kirk of the entire entering freshman class of the University of California at Berkeley, it was found that Chinese-Americans preferred concrete and practical approaches to life.

Chinese males tended to avoid the social sciences, business contact occupations, and verbal-linguistic fields; they showed pre-dominate interests in the physical and biological sciences. Chinese-American females were much more domestically oriented than other females. The results show intra-consistency. If Chinese are inhibited, socially withdrawn, and lower in verbal skills (but higher in quantitative abilities), then they, understandably, have interests in fields minimizing interpersonal interactions.⁴

This reflects the high number of Chinese males who enter scientific fields such as pharmacy, engineering, mathematics rather than becoming teachers, social workers, and psychologists. ✓

It is important to note that the lower verbal ability found in the Sue/Kirk study could be partially accounted for by a bilingual background. Noting that all the tests administered were in English, cultural bias in testing was not accounted for.

One of the common threads of the pursuit in the physical and biological science is high academic achievement. DeVos and Abbott found that educational achievement is consistently valued above other types of achievement in Chinese families. Consequently, college and higher education are the natural course of events. This achievement, especially for Chinese males, is prior to any other achievement. ✓

Education has been utilized by the Chinese to move into higher income and social classes. What has been found by Eckland is true for the Chinese.

Without a college degree, academic achievement is significantly affected by class origins. Thus the effects of academic ability operate solely within the context of the social system, with the high class origin operating as a buffer against downward mobility of sons of nonmanual workers who drop out. These findings put into question the conception that the university functions effectively to sort ✓

and allocate talent into the most appropriate occupational statuses in our social structure.⁷

Shifting to a broader focus, in an attempt to find any correlating studies between tradition and occupations, intergenerational studies of occupations were examined. Again there was little, howbeit the evidence was significant.

Mowsisean, Heath, and Rothney found that in comparing the occupational preferences of bright, white sons and fathers in Wisconsin that:

...two-thirds of the 147 boys tended to make choices at the professional level early in high school and to maintain them. The father population consisted of 5 percent unskilled, and 71 percent non-professional. Children of professional fathers tended to make choices at the same level, whereas those of non-professional fathers tended to choose different levels, thus refuting the results of other studies. Preferences of those whose choices changed two or more times also tended towards professions.⁸

Bacol found the following about Philippine father and sons:

Sons have a propensity to inherit the social stratum of fathers. A substantial number of sons in any occupational group all came from farm origins. By and large, the top-ranking and low ranking occupations are relatively closed. Contrariwise the lower professions and the clerical strata are relatively open. Vertical mobility is characteristically a short distance. A son's education is more important than his father's status in

determining the son's occupational success. In the case of sons coming from higher social origins, occupational success is positively received with education. In the case of sons coming from lower social origins, social origin diminishes the importance of education as a vehicle for mobility.⁹

Marsh found in his study of occupational prestige hierarchy that the Taiwanese were similar to other societies. He made his comparison with the hierarchies of Americans, Danes, Japanese, Filipinos and others.¹⁰

Another study that was made in Brazil supports this theory of common hierarchies, citing the fact that urban living plus industrialization were key factors in producing occupational hierarchies.¹¹

Regarding the employment picture for the Chinese Americans in the future, Chinese need not be ashamed for being reserved or emotionally inhibited. These are highly valued characteristics of Chinese tradition — and did serve a purpose of self-protection at an earlier period in United States history. Concern now needs to be focused on the functional values of these traits under the present circumstances. Traits must now be adopted for attaining proclaimed goals.

Conclusions:

Chinese-Americans prefer a more concrete and practical approach to life. Due to less English verbal facility, their occupational interests are in fields that minimize interpersonal interactions. They show predominate interests in the physical and biological fields, though capable in any chosen field.

CHAPTER NOTES

¹"Success Story of One Minority Group in the U. S.," U. S. News and World Report, December 26, 1966, p. 73.

²Ibid., p. 74.

³Beulah Ong Kwah, "Occupational Status of the American Born Chinese College Graduate," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1947, p. 113.

⁴D. W. Sue and B. A. Kirk, "Psychological Characteristics of Chinese-American Students," Journal of Counselling Psychology, 1972.

⁵G. A. DeVos and K. Abbott, "The Chinese Family in San Francisco," MSW Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1966.

⁶Ibid.

⁷B. K. Eckland, "Academic Ability, Higher Education, and Occupational Mobility," American Sociological Review, 1965.

⁸R. Mowsisean, B. R. G. Heath, and J. W. M. Rothney, "Superior Students' Occupational Preferences and their Father's Occupation," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 1966, pp. 238-42.

⁹Melinda M. Bacol, "Intergenerational Mobility in the Philippines," Philippine Sociological Review, 1971, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰Peter Marsh, "The Explanation of Occupational Prestige," Social Forces, December 1971.

¹¹"Variations in Occupational Prestige Hierarchies: Brazilian Data," American Journal of Sociology, March 1972, pp. 941-956.

CHAPTER III

METHOD OF STUDY

Hypothesis

There would be a difference between traditionalist and modernists and it is unknown which way the differences would go. The null hypothesis is that there is no difference between the way traditionalists and modernists scored or ranked these occupations.

Source of Data and Collection

Originally, 380 questionnaires were to be sent out to obtain a response of at least 297 needed for the 5 percent confidence level. These were to be taken from newspaper subscription lists, from left to right wing in orientations, affording contrast groups, and the best list available. Since some papers did not wish to cooperate, the sample was drawn from the telephone directory by taking every twenty-sixth Chinese name that was clearly Chinese. Besides the usual biases of such a sample method, the respondent was not fixed in each household and might be expected to reflect some status or educational bias.

Description of Questionnaire

The completed questionnaire contained six pages and twelve pages, an English and Chinese version respectively. A head letter was written in English and Chinese. The respondents could then respond to the language they knew best.

The head letter introduced the researcher to the respondents, giving brief background information about the researcher and the research project. I also told the respondents that I had obtained their names from the various newspaper subscription lists. (At this point, there was no time to alter this statement to the San Francisco phone directory.) A deadline of one week following date of mailing was stated. The researcher stressed the confidentiality of the responses, saying that the findings would be reported only in terms of groups. Instruction was noted so that the respondent would fill out the English or Chinese questionnaire appropriate to them. I closed the letter saying that a stamped, self-addressed envelope was enclosed for their usage and told them to respond freely with their comments.

Fifty-six persons responded and returned the questionnaires. Of the fifty-six responses, six were incomplete; their responses were not tabulated.

As will be seen in the following chapter, the sample is probably biased in the direction of higher education and income. Projections to the general Chinese community must be carefully made.

As the respondents returned the questionnaires, the responses were tabulated and recorded.

Variables Measured

The dependent variables measured were seventy-nine different occupations. These included the high, medium, and low occupations of various fields: business, medicine, education, artistic, and the helping professions. The independent variables measured were: head of household or relationship to head, occupation, sex, age, marital status, income, place of birth, education, Chinese language usage and fluency, Western and Chinese dietary practices, attitudes towards Chinese values, Chinese practices, parental and childhood relationships, and dating and marriage attitudes.

Occupations were to be ranked on a scale of 1-100 based on how the person regarded the occupation — and not particular people in them. High, medium, and low occupations were listed in the following categories: business, education, medicine, the helping professions, skilled and unskilled laborers, clerical, and creative.

Changes from Pretest

The questionnaire was pretested on thirty Chinese at the Chinese Baptist Church in Portland, Oregon of whom nine responded. Small changes in wording resulted.

Analysis of Returns

Chi square, T, rank correlations were used as tests of significance and descriptions, r and regressions if indicated. A random sample of selected occupational groups from the returns was taken for analysis, and not the whole returns. A sample of twenty-four occupations were drawn from the total of seventy-nine. Four occupations were randomly chosen from the fields of business, medicine, education, the helping professions, skilled laborer and unskilled laborer categories. Each category of occupations was drawn at random from a hat. The rationale for this sampling and analysis was to be able to meet the deadline date of the report.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Description and analysis of responses for the study are presented in three parts: the first part describes some of the general characteristics of the "returns" population; the second part will speak of the lack of parameters; and the third part contains data testing, results, and discussion.

General Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic characteristics of the respondents are described in Table A. The fifty respondents described here are all of Chinese heritage, they range from age seventeen to sixty-eight, with a mean age of 37.1. Age was reported for all fifty of the respondents. The respondents hold various occupations and represent households which vary in size from a one-person household to a seven-person household.

See Appendix A for the English questionnaire. The Chinese version of the questionnaire is available from the author for research purposes.

TABLE A

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
OF RESPONDENTS

<u>RESPONDENT</u>			
<u>Head of Household</u>	62%		
<u>Other</u>	38%		
<u>SEX</u>			
<u>Male</u>	68%		
<u>Female</u>	32%		
<u>MARITAL STATUS</u>			
<u>Married</u>	52%	<u>Widowed</u>	1 person
<u>Single</u>	41%	<u>Divorced</u>	2 persons
<u>HOUSEHOLD INCOME (1972)</u>			
\$	0 — \$ 1,999		4 persons
\$	2,000 — \$ 4,999		1%
\$	5,000 — \$ 9,999		20%
\$	10,000 — \$14,999		26%
\$	15,000 — \$19,999		16%
\$	20,000 — \$25,999		14%
\$	26,000 and up		1 person

TABLE A — Continued

<u>COUNTRY OF BIRTH</u>	
<u>China</u> (Including mainland China, Taiwan, Macao, and Hong Kong territories)	51%
<u>U.S.A.</u>	38%
<u>Other</u>	5 persons
<u>PLACE OF EDUCATION</u>	
<u>All U.S.A.</u>	62%
<u>All China</u>	4 persons
<u>Both</u>	28%
<u>EDUCATION</u>	
<u>Grade School</u>	1 person
<u>High School</u>	17%
<u>Some College</u>	20%
<u>College Graduation</u>	42% ✓
<u>Postgraduate</u>	13% ✓
<u>Masters</u>	1 person
<u>Doctorate</u>	1 person
<u>Other</u>	2 persons

TABLE A — Continued

<u>LANGUAGE FLUENCY</u>			
<u>Cantonese</u>		<u>Mandarin</u>	
Well	43%	Well	10%
Average	25%	Average	14%
Somewhat	22%	Somewhat	25%
None	2 persons	None	14%

<u>LANGUAGE READ</u>	
<u>English</u>	41%
<u>Both English & Chinese</u>	59%

<u>LANGUAGE WRITTEN</u>	
<u>English</u>	41%
<u>Both English & Chinese</u>	59%*

*Rounded off to nearest percent

Respondent Attitudes Concerning Chinese Practices

An overview of respondent attitudes concerning various Chinese practices is given in Table B.

TABLE B

OVERVIEW OF RESPONDENT ATTITUDES
CONCERNING CHINESE PRACTICES

CHINESE LANGUAGE ATTITUDE

<u>Yes</u> (Chinese should learn Chinese)	90%
<u>No</u>	0%
<u>Not Sure</u>	3 people

DIETARY PRACTICES

<u>Western Dishes</u>		<u>Chinese Dishes</u>	
Eat Often	24%	Eat Often	90%
Eat Sometimes	60%	Eat Sometimes	2 persons
Eat Seldom	4 persons	Eat Seldom	1 person

CHINESE VALUES

<u>Highly Sympathetic</u>	37%
<u>Sympathetic</u>	22%
<u>Neutral</u>	16%
<u>Unsympathetic</u>	2 persons
<u>Highly Unsympathetic</u>	1 person
<u>Mixed</u>	17%

MEMBERSHIP IN TONG/CHINESE ASSOCIATIONS

<u>Yes</u>	4 persons
<u>No</u>	90%

TABLE B — Continued

HERBALIST

<u>Yes</u>	29%
<u>No</u>	6 persons
<u>Perhaps</u>	56%

RELIGION

<u>Buddhist</u>	3 persons
<u>Protestants</u>	23%
<u>Catholics</u>	12%
<u>Other</u>	57%

CELEBRATE CHINESE NEW YEAR'S

<u>Yes</u>	90%
<u>No</u>	5 persons

CELEBRATE CHINESE INDEPENDENCE DAY

<u>Yes</u>	29%
<u>No</u>	71%

FAMILY RULER

<u>Father</u>	28%	<u>Grandparents</u>	4 persons
<u>Father & Mother</u>	61%	<u>Other</u>	1 person

TABLE B -- Continued

PARENTAL OBEDIENCE

<u>In School Choice</u>		<u>In Mate Choice</u>	
Yes and Depends	78%	Yes and Depends	55%
No	22%	No	45%
<u>In Career Choice</u>			
Yes and Depends	54%		
No	46%		

BOY TO COLLEGE

<u>Strongly Agree</u>	3 persons	<u>Disagree</u>	38%
<u>Agree</u>	4 persons	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	27%
<u>Neutral</u>	15%	<u>Mixed</u>	2 persons

BOY/GIRL TO SCHOOL CHOICE

<u>Boy</u>	81%
<u>Girl</u>	3 persons

CHINESE SHOULD DATE

<u>Chinese</u>	20%	<u>Others</u>	2 persons
<u>Also Orientals</u>	11%	<u>Anyone</u>	51%
<u>Chinese, Orientals, Whites</u>	2 persons		

TABLE B — Continued

CHINESE SHOULD NOT DATE

<u>Whites & Others</u>	26%	<u>Orientals & Whites</u>	1 person
<u>Others</u> (41% of which were specified as "Blacks")	65%	<u>Whites</u>	3 persons

CHINESE SHOULD MARRY

<u>Chinese</u>	37%	<u>Orientals</u>	2 persons
<u>Anyone</u>	41%	<u>Whites</u>	1 person
<u>Chinese & Orientals</u>	15%		

CHINESE SHOULD NOT MARRY

<u>Whites & Others</u>	18%
<u>Others</u> (47% of which were specified as "Blacks")	78%
<u>Orientals & Whites</u>	1 person

Summing up the majority* responses regarding general characteristics of the respondents, most respondents in this descriptive study are heads of households. There are significantly more male than female respondents, and slightly more married than unmarried ones. The median family income of our study was \$12,500. Slightly over half of the respondents were born in the United States, followed by one-third born in China. Most respondents were educated in the United States, with approximately a third educated in both countries. The majority of respondents have had either some college or have graduated from college. A majority of our sample speak Cantonese either "well" or "average;" slightly under a half spoke Mandarin either "somewhat" or "average." Most of the respondents could read and write in both Chinese and English.

A great majority of our group maintained that Chinese young people should learn the Chinese language. A great majority ate Chinese food often; just under two-thirds ate Western dishes sometimes. Slightly over the majority were either highly sympathetic or sympathetic to Chinese values. A large majority did

*The term "majority" is used to mean fifth percent or more.

not belong to a Tong or other Chinese association. Slightly over a half said they might go to a herbalist. A majority responded to "Other" in the religious category, said "yes" to celebrating Chinese New Year's, but did not celebrate Chinese Independence Day. The majority said that father and mother should rule the home. A majority agreed or said "depends" when asked whether children should obey their parents regarding schooling, career, or choosing a mate. Most disagreed that only boys should be encouraged to go to college; yet if given an opportunity to send only a son or a daughter, a large majority said the boy should go. A majority said that Chinese should date anyone they wished; yet reported that Chinese should not date "others" — half of which were specified as Blacks. A majority replied that Chinese should marry Chinese and or Orientals and said that they should not marry "others," (again, half of which were specified as Blacks).

Lack of Parameters

Lack of parameters made it impossible to compare our demographic data to make any significant conclusive statements pertinent to sampling or significance in findings. The pertinent study, "Chinatown 1970 Census:

Population and Housing Summary and Analysis," surveyed only 56.5 percent of the Chinese in San Francisco non-randomly. Even if the data were compared with this study, the comparison would be pertinent only to slightly over a half of the entire population. This is hardly adequate to represent the general demographic data of the entire population of the Chinese in San Francisco.

Consequently, significant parameters such as number and population by age, race density; median ages, incomes; and averages of persons in households and family are not to be had, as well as other pertinent data.

Howbeit, let us make use of the parameters we do have and see if there are significant findings.

According to the census study, the median age varied in each of the areas studied. Moving from the "core" area to the "expanded" area, the median age became lower. The "core" median age was 41.0, "residential" was 39.3, and the "expanded" was 36.0. Taking the median of these ages we have 38.7. Our study's median age is 37.1. We differ 1.6 years. Based upon this data, we could not conclude that our sample was representative of the entire population.¹

Secondly, according to the study there are approximately equal numbers of men and women in the areas studied, men exceeding women by a half of a percent.² Our study reflected a two to one ratio of men to women. Based upon this data, we could not conclude that our sample is representative.

Finally there was no data regarding median income or education. Our study showed that for our group median income came to \$12,500 and that most had either had some college or had graduated from college. It is interesting to note that the Sing, Chan, and Wang study done of some of Portland's Chinese reflected some similar findings. Exactly half of the study group had household incomes that ranged from \$8,000 to \$16,000 and close to two-thirds had either some college or college graduation. In our study as in theirs, two-thirds of the "college" group were college graduates.

Other interesting points of comparison with their study are sex ratio, countries of birth, and marital status. Both studies were similar in that males responded close to two to one in comparison with females. The majority of our group was born in China, while their majority was born in the United States. Just over three-quarters of their group were married, while slightly over half of ours were. Our study reflected

three and a half times more single respondents than theirs.

Their return sample was also small in comparison to the number of questionnaires sent out: 73 responses for 355 questionnaires. Our study reflected a similar pattern: 56 responses for 380 questionnaires. Their study was briefer: two pages long as compared to our six pages.³

Data Testing, Hypothesis and Results

Chi square and rank correlations were used as tests of significance and descriptions, r was indicated and used.

Our study has attempted to prove that Traditionalists and Moderns varied in their outlook.

In order to determine if there was a significant difference between these two groups, a null hypothesis was formulated. This hypothesis stated: "There is no significant difference between the Traditionalists and the Modernists."

To test this hypothesis, a Chi square was employed. Our study needed to compare base data with our operational definitions of Chinese traditionalism and modernism. Consequently, having categorized the respondents as either traditional or modern according to the conditions stated in Chapter I, a Chi square was

administered to see whether education, income or sex made any significant differences.

The results of these Chi squares are shown in the following table:

TABLE I

CHI SQUARES FOR SORTING OF BASE DATA

Data Compared	D.F.	χ^2	P	Null Hypotheses
Education	1	.60317	.05	Accepted
Sex	1	.68437	.05	"
Income	1	2.53225	.05	"

The Chi square was not significant beyond the .05 level. With the Chi square this small, the null hypothesis that chance factors would be responsible for the differences was accepted. The assumption thus is that chance is operating in both the selection of choices made by both groups. The conclusion then is that education, income or sex are not associated with whether Chinese persons in our group are traditionalist or modern.

A rank-difference correlation was done to see whether there is any association between the occupational rankings of traditionalists and modernists.

A rank correlation of .86 was measured with N of 24 is significantly different from 0 beyond the .01 level of confidence. Traditionalists and moderns as a group tend to rank occupations similarly.

Based on individual scorings of occupations, however, a Pearsonian r yielded a coefficient of .106, not significantly different from 0 at the .05 level. Those in the sample were heterogeneous as individuals with a wide variance on occupational scores on a 101 point scale.

Moderns tended to score occupations higher than traditionalists did, with a difference of 4.458 in the means over all occupations analyzed.

The conclusion of our analysis is that there is not a difference in the way traditionalists and moderns rank occupations and that the differences are not based on income, education, or sex, but are most likely random, or due to the reluctance of some to differentiate among specific occupations.

The next chapter will discuss some of the implications of these findings.

CHAPTER NOTES

¹San Francisco Department of City Planning, Chinatown 1970 Census: Population and Housing Summary Analysis, p. 18.

²Ibid., p. 4.

³Laura Lum Sing, Wendy Po-Kow Chan, and Peter Tan-Ping Wang, "Chinese Attitudes and Knowledge Concerning Social Services: A Survey of the Portland Chinese Community," Master's Thesis, Portland State University, 1973, p. 33.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is divided into three parts: tentative conclusions of findings and implications for practice, critique of study, and recommendations.

Summary and Implications

As indicated by the review of the literature, social work research is slowly being done regarding the Chinese in America. This research found that members of the San Francisco Chinese community studied are a fairly homogeneous group so far as attitudes concerning occupational rankings are concerned. It was found that there existed little difference within groups of respondents when compared according to sex, education, or household income level.

The researcher's initial opinion, unconfirmed by the research, was that Chinese are different in their responses to occupational ranking. The second impression was that the differences in response were due to being traditional or modern was not confirmed in that there was no statistically significant difference found in their occupational rankings. The Moderns tended to rank the various occupations higher than the

traditionalists. This confirms the impression that Traditionalists would regard occupations with less deference.

Briefly summarizing the findings, the majority of respondents ranked different occupations similarly. The majority of respondents were sympathetic to Chinese values and practiced Chinese customs though there was much evidence for acculturation.

Some of the implications for social work practice are discussed below.

Most of the Chinese in our sample spoke either Cantonese or Mandarin. Professional help may be unresponsive to the needs of Chinese-Americans as there is a critical shortage of bilingual therapists.¹

Both Tom and the Sues feel that the high rate of suicide in Chinatown warrants great concern for the mental health needs of the Chinese. Low utilization of mental health facilities may not support the latter statement as it is a traditional practice to keep difficulties in the family. Using this natural network may lay the groundwork for community mental health.²

Present lack of parameters for research purposes makes it difficult to do research of the Chinese population that would be generally significant. Though much research of the Chinese in America is needed, if

one cannot compare data with parameters, the significance of the data is of a tenuous nature.

The small sample return via questionnaire could have reflected the conservative attitude of the Chinese to reveal their knowledge, feelings, or attitudes. The Nees found that speaking Cantonese and interviewing are the best tools to attain the aforementioned.³

Discussion

A discussion of the major limitations of this study are as follows.

The sample return is one limitation which must be considered here. Because of the small sample size, and the fact that return was not a random sample, generalizations to larger Chinese populations must be made with reservations. However, the respondents may represent those who are most responsive in the San Francisco Chinese community in terms of occupational knowledge. A bias toward higher education and higher income levels may be present. The small sample forced combination of categories, so that differences were obscured. Further studies need to be conducted on a more extensive scale with larger representative samples.

However, despite the limitations of sample size, it should be pointed out that the probabilities computed for the associations between education, sex and possibly income, versus traditional and modern orientation were such that it would take a manifold larger sample with divergent responses to upset the findings. This is probably true with respect to other factors less related to tradition or modernity.

Most of the difference in rankings are accounted for by two occupations, lawyer and used car salesman. With the homogeneity shown over sex, age, marital status, place of birth, and other traits both measured and unmeasured, a good first approximation in that similar homogeneity will be found in the larger population.

The non-rankers may have been reluctant to judge people or refused to go along with the system of ranking occupations.

The differences in variations reflected some interesting traits. In two instances, two respondents ranked 56 of the 79 occupations as zero; in another 35 were ranked as zero. Three respondents ranked the majority of the occupations as 50:45, 26, and 60 respectively. One person ranked 45 of the occupations only in the 60's. Fourteen people would not rank below a certain figure: two ranked their lowest occupation

at 30, two ranked their lowest at 40, six at 50, three at 60 and one at 70. One ranked all the occupations as 100 and another ranked them only 90 or 100. Four people left significant portions of their rankings blank: two left 18 blank, one had 45 and one left 51 blank. One had markings of only 0, 50, or 100. This is striking as they took the instructions quite literally — giving no variations although instructions were to the contrary. One person ranked occupations as variations of 70, 68 being the lowest and 75 being the highest.

The implications for society and research are most interesting. Our study shows that a significant portion of respondents did not follow the system of ranking occupations as usually conceived or prescribed. It was found that it was the younger that tended to be deviant. What would happen if we had a statusless society? Think of how it would affect relationships such as parental ambition and childhood aspiration, the marital relationship, and that of employer and employee. What would it do to our whole concept of ambition, occupational aspiration, education, authority, and financial security? Though our study cannot speak for all peoples, it does speak to some portion who might reflect a significant trend in the thinking about occupations and status or prestige.

The design of the questionnaire is another limitation to be considered. In further studies, the questions need to be more specific and differentiating. Also in the questionnaire, a definition was not given for "traditional Chinese values," thus different respondents might have had different interpretations of the terms. The researchers may have been misled by some of the respondents' answers to these questions.

The questionnaire as a method of obtaining a sample may not have been the most effective method in that the low response rate may have in part been due to the fact that some people in the sample could neither read nor write in Chinese and/or English. The use of interviewing may have alleviated this difficulty. When the questionnaire was translated from its English version to the Chinese version, some of the Chinese words might have carried a slightly different meaning from English words. Thus the two versions might have had undetected discrepancies in meanings. A positive quality of the questionnaire is that the answers of respondents remain anonymous and confidential and thus respondents may have felt freer in answering as compared to interviewing.

The Nees found that with Chinese in San Francisco Chinatown, informal interviews which were like open-ended conversations seemed to bring richer participation

and involved a full range of responses.⁴ But studies show that good questionnaires give fully adequate responses and more precision.

This study, though descriptive in nature and having limitations, has contributed toward better understanding of the Chinese community in relation to Traditional/Modern attitudes and occupational ranking, for social work as a profession, and for other interested and concerned persons.

Recommendations

Looking beyond the statistical analysis, there are a few tentative generalizations which might be made for purposes of professional practice.

1. Chinese should not be stereotyped with respect either to their life styles, levels, or attitudes and opinions. Within the categories there were many individual differences and patterns. The older Chinese and the schooled Chinese are not far removed from the younger and Chinese are not much different from the rest of Americans in traits measured. Further research must be done on the impact of Chinese culture or what it means to be Chinese or American. Further study needs to be done before we can attribute opinions, attitudes, or behavior to being Chinese. Chinese have a full

range of responses and comments. Discrepancy between occupational aspiration and occupational opportunities are probably an individual matter and not characteristic of the population under study.

2. One set of respondents, 10 percent of the returns took the position that all occupations were of the same value, though appropriate for different persons. These were included in the hierarchical analysis.
3. The aspirations of Chinese reflected in our sample, for their children are probably such that the children will not suffer as an ethnic trait. Case work methods are appropriate for possible individual cases of inadequate or inappropriate ambition, but no common problem was found.

CHAPTER NOTES

¹Stanley Sue and Derald Wing Sue, "Chinese-American Personality and Mental Health, "Asian-American Psychological Perspectives," Science and Behaviour Books, Inc., Ben Lomond, Ca., 1973, p. 122.

²Ibid., p. 123

³Victor G. and Bret de Bary Nee, Longtime Californ', Pantheon Books, New York, 1972, p. xv.

⁴Ibid., p. xiv.

APPENDIX

CHINESE COMMUNITY SURVEY: 1973

For each question, please "x" the response which mostly matches your own, or, where indicated, fill in the blank with your answer.

1. Relationship to head of household:

Head of house _____

Other (Please specify) _____

2. Occupation _____ Sex _____ Age _____

Marital status _____ Number of dependents _____

3. Total income for household for last fiscal year (1972). This is income before taxes. (Check)

0 - \$ 1,999 _____ \$15,000 - \$19,999 _____

\$ 2,000 - \$ 4,999 _____ \$20,000 - \$25,999 _____

\$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999 _____ If over \$26,000, please
state approximate income

\$10,000 - \$14,999 _____

4. The country of my birth is

_____ China (includes mainland China, Taiwan,
Macao, and Hong Kong area)

_____ U.S.A. (includes any U. S. territory)

_____ Other (please specify) _____

5. In what country or countries did you attend school during:

first 5 years of schooling _____

second 5 years of schooling _____

third 5 years of schooling _____

fourth 5 years of schooling _____

6. Vocational or educational level: (Please check nearest completed)

Grade school _____ Postgraduate _____

High school _____ Masters _____

Some college _____ Doctorate _____

College graduation _____ Other: (Please specify) _____

7. What Chinese dialects do you speak? (Check)

	<u>None</u>	<u>Somewhat well</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Well</u>
Mandarin	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cantonese	_____	_____	_____	_____
Other	_____	_____	_____	_____
Others (Please specify)	_____			

8. What languages do you read? (Check)

Chinese _____

English _____

Others (Please specify) _____

9. What languages do you write? (Check)

Chinese _____

English _____

Others (Please specify) _____

10. Do you think Chinese young people should learn the

Chinese language? Yes _____ No _____ Not sure _____

11. In a typical week do you eat:
Western Dishes: often___ sometimes___ seldom___
Chinese Dishes: often___ sometimes___ seldom___
12. What feelings do you usually have about traditional Chinese values:
____ Highly sympathetic ____ Unsympathetic
____ Sympathetic ____ Highly unsympathetic
____ Neutral ____ Mixed
13. I have an active membership in a Tong or other Chinese association: Yes____ No____
14. Would you go to a Chinese herbalist:
Yes____ No____ Perhaps____
15. I am a ____ Buddhist, Taoist, or Confucian
____ Protestant
____ Catholic
____ Other
16. I celebrate Chinese New Year's Day:
Yes____ No____
17. I celebrate Chinese Independence Day:
Yes____ No____
18. The head of the house should be: (Check)
father____ grandparents____
mother____ other____
father & mother together____

19. I would obey my parent's wishes regarding:

Choice of schooling: Yes___ No___ Depends___

Choice of career: Yes___ No___ Depends___

Choice of mate: Yes___ No___ Depends___

20. Chinese boys should be encouraged to go to college more than Chinese girls:

___ Strongly agree ___ Disagree

___ Agree ___ Strongly Disagree

___ Neutral ___ Mixed

21. If you only had one boy and one girl and could send only one child to school, which would you send? Boy___ Girl___

22. Chinese should date: (Please check all that apply)

___ Chinese ___ Others

___ (also) Orientals ___ Anyone (regardless of race, color or creed)

___ Whites

23. Chinese should not date: (Check all that apply)

___ Chinese

___ Other Orientals

___ Whites

___ Others (Please specify) _____

24. Chinese should marry: (Check all that apply)

_____ Only Chinese

_____ Other Orientals

_____ Whites

_____ Others

_____ Anyone (regardless of race, color or creed)

25. Chinese should not marry: (Check all that apply)

_____ Chinese

_____ Other Orientals

_____ Whites

_____ Others (Please specify) _____

Listed below are various occupations. Please show how you regard each of these occupations (not particular people in them) by placing any number from 0 to 100 in the space beside that occupation. Let 0 stand for no respect whatsoever; let 50 stand for middle or average, and let 100 be the very highest any could be. Other numbers are in between. If you change your mind, please draw a line through your first answer and put a new number to the left.

Example: 72 airplane mechanic

A person who rated this occupation as "72" might think that the pay is better than that of an auto mechanic, it takes considerable training but average education, a person with equal skill or intelligence might become a dentist and make much more money; the work of a mechanic is dirty, or there may be a number of other thoughts.

<u> </u> accountant	<u> </u> tailor
<u> </u> factory owner	<u> </u> upholsterer
<u> </u> building contractor	<u> </u> pharmacist
<u> </u> car salesman	<u> </u> nurse
<u> </u> insurance salesman	<u> </u> doctor
<u> </u> show owner	<u> </u> medical technician
<u> </u> general manager of department store	<u> </u> nurse's aide
<u> </u> banker	<u> </u> dietitian
<u> </u> sales person	<u> </u> hospital ward clerk
<u> </u> mechanic	<u> </u> dental hygienist
<u> </u> carpenter	<u> </u> city councilman
<u> </u> repairman	<u> </u> civil engineer
<u> </u> barber/beauty operator	<u> </u> public prosecutor
<u> </u> farmer	<u> </u> meter maid
	<u> </u> highway construction worker

___ factory foreman	___ mailman
___ electrician	___ executive secretary
___ computer programmer	___ bank teller
___ draftsman	___ typist
___ machinist	___ file clerk
___ painter	___ bookkeeper/cashier
___ university professor	___ social worker
___ elementary school teacher	___ psychologist
___ middle school teacher	___ lawyer
___ teacher's aide	___ policeman
___ school receptionist	___ fireman
___ union official	___ juvenile court counselor
___ maid	___ recreation director
___ grocery clerk	___ social security counselor
___ taxicab driver	___ author
___ janitor	___ actor
___ rubbish collector	___ fashion designer
___ truck driver	___ minister
___ sales clerk	___ nun
___ farm laborer	___ missionary
___ newsboy	___ priest
___ dishwasher	___ gas station attendant
___ waiter	___ bus driver
___ cook	___ housekeeper

___ chef

___ child care worker

___ parking attendant